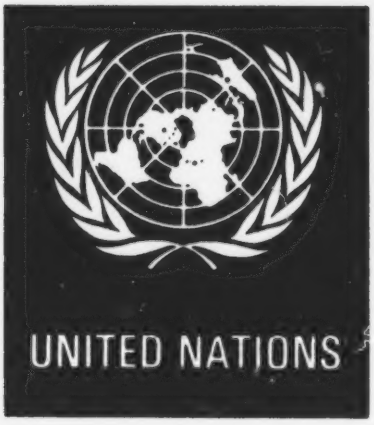

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL BULLETIN ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

1994

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I. COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 29 November 1994, the International Day of Solidarity was observed at United Nations Headquarters, New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, as well as in several other cities, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

All States members of the United Nations and specialized agencies and observers were invited to attend the solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that took place on that day.

At that meeting, statements were made by: Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), President of the General Assembly; Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan (India), Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General and Representative of the Secretary-General to the Multilateral Peace Talks on the Middle East, who read out the Secretary-General's message; and Ms. Madeleine Albright (United States of America), President of the Security Council for the month of November. The Permanent Observer of Palestine, Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Also, Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), made a statement in his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

In addition, the representative of Indonesia, Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, read out a message from President Soeharto in his capacity as Chairman of the Tenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. A further message was delivered by Mr. Shaukat Umer (Pakistan), on behalf of Mr. Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, read out a message from the Secretary-General of the organization, Mr. Ahmed Ismat Abdul Meguid. A further statement was made by Mr. Larry Ekin, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

Concluding statements were made by the Chairman of the Committee and Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Messages to commemorate the occasion were received from 23 heads of State, 8 heads of Government, 2 Governments, 14 Foreign Ministers, as well as the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A further message was received from a non-governmental organization.

In further commemoration of the International Day, the Committee arranged the screening of a series of films during the week beginning 29 November in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. In addition, an art exhibit entitled "Images from Palestine" was presented by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, in the Public Lobby at United Nations Headquarters from 29 November to 5 December 1994.

At the United Nations Office at Geneva, a solemn meeting was held on 29 November. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who opened the meeting with the reading of the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The Permanent Representative of Malta at Geneva, Mr. M. Bartolo, spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Petrovsky also read out the statement sent by Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The Permanent Observer of Palestine at Geneva, Mr. Nabil Ramlawi, also delivered a statement. Further statements were made by representatives of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity and the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. Messages were received from the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic and the President of the Russian Federation. Other related activities included films shown before the opening ceremony and an exhibit mounted by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat.

At the United Nations Office at Vienna, a solemn meeting was also held on 29 November. In an opening statement, Mr. Said Ibrahim Gailani (Afghanistan) spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Other speakers included: Mr. N. Jasentuliyana, Deputy to the Director-General, who delivered the message from the Secretary-General; Mr. Albert Rohan, Acting Director of the Department of Political Affairs of the Austrian Foreign Ministry; Mr. Samir Youssef Hezzah, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the international organizations; and Mr. Feisal Aweidah, Permanent Observer of Palestine at Vienna. An exhibition as well as film screenings on Palestinian culture were conducted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

II. TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE AND MESSAGES DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 1994

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Statement by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

Today the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure to welcome His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly, Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan, Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General and Representative to the Multilateral Peace Talks on the Middle East, His Excellency Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, His Excellency Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of Palestine, and Mrs. Rosario Green, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone present to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We are greatly honoured by the participation in this meeting of many eminent guests. For 16 years, it has been our tradition to hold a formal meeting on 29 November of each year in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Throughout this period, the United Nations, its bodies and agencies, and its Secretary-General have contributed to the international community's efforts to bring about the peace, justice and stability of which the peoples of the Middle East have long been deprived.

The three years since the peace process began in Madrid in October 1991 have transformed the region. The parties to the conflict have rejected their age-old attitude of distrust and hatred and have joined forces to achieve a common goal: the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in their part of the world. Decisive events had taken place prior to last year's Day of Solidarity. Now, 12 months later, we are once again witnessing events of political importance. The bilateral negotiations between Israel and the PLO and Israel and Jordan have scored notable successes. Our Committee welcomed the signing by Israel and the PLO of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, the subsequent withdrawal of the Israeli troops from those areas, the deployment of the Palestinian police force, the return of President Arafat and other Palestinian leaders to Gaza and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. Another piece of good news was the signing by the parties of the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities regarding the West Bank. The Israeli-Jordanian negotiations have culminated in a peace treaty. Ancient foes have now embarked on the road to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect and cooperation in solving various regional problems.

Significant as this bilateral progress may be, international assistance is no less necessary and urgent if the development of the occupied Palestinian territory and a rapid improvement of Palestinian living conditions are to be ensured so that the peace dividend can yield tangible results. There will also be a need for consistent, targeted and well-structured economic support, which could possibly be incorporated into a future multilateral programme to establish a new economic regime in the region. In that regard, it is extremely gratifying to note the considerable progress that has been made in the multilateral talks on the regional problems of the Middle East. Our Committee has also noted the recent Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit, which it considers to be an important step in the right direction.

Since the beginning of the Madrid peace process, the United Nations has been involved in its various aspects. Last year, once again, in its resolution 48/158 A, the General Assembly reaffirmed

"That the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy".

Last year, in resolution 48/58, the General Assembly recalled

"that an active United Nations role in the Middle East process and in assisting in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles can make a positive contribution".

In this connection, the Committee welcomed the timely and decisive steps taken by the Secretary-General in support of the peace process, in particular by appointing a Special Coordinator in the occupied territories. As you know, the Special Coordinator will oversee all United Nations economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinians.

Although the negotiations are continuing, the situation on the ground remains tense. The Israeli authorities often subject the Palestinians to restrictive measures, particularly in the West Bank, including Jerusalem. The repeated closure of the Gaza Strip and the impossible situation facing thousands of Palestinians trying to go to work in Israel have exacerbated their economic difficulties and cannot fail to heighten tensions. The overall economic situation in the occupied territories, particularly the Gaza Strip, is still very worrying. The establishment of settlements near the Holy City has still not stopped. The Committee is also much alarmed by acts of deadly violence that put the peace process in jeopardy.

In its mandate, our Committee will continue to monitor the situation in the region closely, in particular with regard to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. In cooperation with the Governments and international NGOs, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is working tirelessly to achieve its goals and will spare no effort to help establish a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mr. Amara Essy,
President of the forty-ninth session

[Original: French]

Let me begin, Mr. Chairman, by thanking you and the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to participate in this importance observance.

Recognizing the need to promote and encourage international efforts in support of the Palestinian people, the General Assembly, in its resolution 32/40 B, called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. For the international community, this Day is an opportunity to renew its pledge to the Palestinian people to continue to support its legitimate aspirations and demands.

The question of Palestine has been a major concern of the United Nations practically since its foundation. Despite recent decisive and positive developments, it remains the oldest unresolved conflict on the Organization's agenda. I would recall that the Assembly has repeatedly affirmed that the United Nations bears the historic responsibility of ensuring a just settlement of the question of Palestine based on the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights in accordance with the principles of the Charter and with United Nations resolutions.

All the parties concerned are now increasingly aware that the United Nations has an essential and positive role to play both by facilitating the peace process and by providing the Palestinian people with the economic assistance it urgently needs for its development.

On this Day, it is my pleasure to refer to the progress that has been made towards a settlement of the question of Palestine. Over the past year, we have seen striking developments in the peace process begun at Madrid in October 1991 despite repeated delays and violence provoked by the enemies of peace. We welcomed the signing, on 4 May 1994 at Cairo, of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, the subsequent withdrawal of the Israeli troops from those areas, the deployment of Palestinian police, the return to Gaza of President Arafat and other Palestinian leaders, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the release by the Israeli Government of a number of prisoners. We also noted with pleasure the signing on 29 August 1994 of the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities.

During the current session of the General Assembly, the overwhelming majority of delegations have welcomed these developments as important steps towards the implementation of the Declaration of Principles; they have expressed the hope that negotiations will proceed speedily and successfully towards the full implementation of the Declaration. It is also hoped that the peace treaty between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, signed on 26 October 1994, will lead to rapid progress in negotiations with the other parties to the Middle East conflict. All this bodes well, and shows that a satisfactory solution to this conflict, which has already lasted so long, may now be in sight.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I commend all the parties concerned for the courage and determination they have shown to achieve a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. Yet the United Nations must remain vigilant in preventing wear and tear from taking their toll on the results of the agreements that have been concluded thus far. The Organization must be ready to defuse the hostility and mistrust that the peoples of the region continue to feel towards each other, and to continue, in the interests of international peace and security, to work towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Under your wise and able guidance, the Committee has done its best to focus world attention on the plight of the Palestinian people, and that task is far from finished. The Palestinian people are preparing to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination, and that is the very moment when they will need generous support from the international community. The Committee must therefore ensure that the Palestinian people receives all the assistance its needs in order to achieve the exercise of its inalienable rights and take its proper place in the international community.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General,
delivered by Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan, Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General and Representative of the Secretary-General to the Multilateral Peace Talks on the Middle East

On this Day last year, I spoke of the historic developments that had taken place in connection with the question of Palestine. The past year has witnessed further dramatic and encouraging developments. Following the Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993 by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, negotiations between the parties led to the signing, in May 1994 in Cairo, of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from most of those areas, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the deployment of a Palestinian police force and the signing in August 1994 of the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities regarding the West Bank.

Last month we warmly welcomed the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. It is my fervent hope that this historic event will be followed by full implementation of the Declaration of Principles and by progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks of the peace process. The goal of the international community - the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) - will then truly be within its grasp.

In commemorating this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the United Nations expresses its ongoing responsibility towards the Palestinian people. I take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

But this occasion is also a time for drawing attention to current needs and difficulties. In that regard, I would be failing in my duty as Secretary-General if I did not draw attention to the dangerous gap which has opened up between the expressed commitment of the international community to support the Palestinian people and the results on the ground.

The international community has pledged some $670 million for 1994. Yet today, with 11 months of the year already gone, less than $200 million has actually reached the occupied territories. Well over half of that assistance has been channelled through the United Nations programmes and agencies operating in the area.

In fact, during the past year, the United Nations has significantly enlarged its programmes of economic, social and other assistance in the occupied territories. With a view to ensuring effective coordination and intensification of United Nations assistance, I appointed, in June 1994, Mr. Terje Rod Larsen of Norway as Special Coordinator in the occupied territories. His efforts have focused primarily on Gaza, where needs are greatest. In close cooperation with the World

Bank and the donor community, Mr. Larsen is working actively to mobilize the resources and expertise of the United Nations system in support of the Palestinian Authority.

The experience of the United Nations in other parts of the world has shown repeatedly that, in a post-conflict situation, the infusion of economic resources, together with concerted action on a number of other fronts, is essential if true and lasting peace is to be secured.

The commitment of the international community to the peace process in the region was and remains crucial to its success. But that political commitment must now be matched by immediate, tangible support for the Palestinian people as they begin the task of rebuilding their society.

Today, therefore, I call upon the international community to ensure the prompt and effective delivery of the assistance already pledged - but not yet delivered - to the Palestinian people, in the course of this year.

I also call upon States Members of the United Nations to make every effort to sustain, and if possible to increase, current levels of support in the course of 1995.

It would be tragic indeed if the failure of the international community to match its words with deeds were to jeopardize the peace process for which so many have given so much - including, in some cases, their lives - at a time when a lasting and comprehensive peace seems to be at last within sight in the Middle East.

On this importance occasion, I reiterate my pledge to make every possible effort in support of peace in the Middle East, and to ensure that the United Nations system contributes its utmost in the fields of economic and social development. The Palestinian people, to whom this Organization has maintained a special commitment for nearly five decades, deserves no less.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Mrs. Madeleine Albright, President of the Security Council for the month of November 1994

We have witnessed dramatic breakthroughs over the last year in the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis. The Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel have concluded historic agreements and are working together towards their implementation. With these agreements, the Palestinian people have begun the process of exercising self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. We all hope that the commitment to negotiations as a path to achievement of their legitimate rights will bring the Palestinian people the rewards of reconciliation and peace.

We are aware that the transitional process poses a need for extensive economic assistance to the Palestinians as they create effective institutions of self-rule and seek to improve their quality of life.

We share in the international community's overwhelming support for the agreements reached and in its readiness to help the Palestinian people build a healthy economy through a working mechanism for channelling international aid efficiently and effectively. We hope that the resources of donor countries and of the United Nations will arrive quickly, be well coordinated and focused where they are most needed - in Gaza and Jericho - on projects to raise residents' living standards. As the Casablanca economic summit recognized, the new opportunities for regional economic cooperation and developments need to begin with the development of the Palestinian economy.

For many years, the Security Council has been closely associated with the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. As President of the Council, I am particularly gratified that the progress achieved has been reached in the course of negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Council can be proud that these resolutions are the basis for the success generated on several bilateral tracks of the peace process, in the framework of the peace conference on the Middle East convened at Madrid on 30 October 1991.

The Palestinians, Israelis and other peoples of the Middle East have begun the journey towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Until that goal is achieved, the Security Council, guided by its responsibilities under the Charter, is committed to continuing its efforts on behalf of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people.

PALESTINE

Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the solemn meeting you are holding today, 29 November, in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it gives me pleasure to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Palestinian people, on behalf of my colleagues the members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the members of the Palestinian National Authority and on my own personal behalf, the sincerest greetings and best wishes and our great thanks for your invitation to attend the meeting and address this demonstration of solidarity.

I should also like to convey to you personally, Mr. Chairman, to your Committee and to the United Nations and its Secretary-General our warm gratitude and deep appreciation for your dedicated and sustained efforts and your important activities in solidarity with and in support of the just struggle of the Palestinian people to put an end to Israeli occupation of its land and its holy places and for the restoration and exercise of its inalienable national rights and, primarily, its right to exercise self-determination and establish an independent State with its capital at Jerusalem.

For many years now, the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been tirelessly expanding its activities in solidarity with our people, and this has had a major impact in promoting, mobilizing and giving direction to worldwide support and to the rising tide of solidarity with our people's just struggle. This is an effort that we value very highly and it will continue to enjoy the greatest appreciation and respect of our people.

In the difficult and crucial circumstances in which our people finds itself today, there is even a greater need than ever for more such worthy activities and efforts. The present critical stage represents a decisive turning-point in the progress of our people's just struggle and in the history of the region. The Palestinian people has now begun the process of building and reconstruction. It has begun to establish vital amenities and national institutions and to lay firm foundations and establish sound structures for the Palestinian National Authority so that a just and comprehensive peace can be established and consolidated in Palestine and in the region, a peace of the brave based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

Such a peace must ensure the rights, security, stability and prosperity of all the peoples and States of the region and, for the Palestinian people, the end of Israeli occupation of its land and holy places and the restoration and exercise of the inalienable national rights of which the Committee is the most worthy stalwart defender in striving to achieve recognition of those rights and their exercise in practice.

If this is to be achieved, Israel must comply with the provisions of the Declaration of Principles signed at Washington on 13 September 1993, of the Cairo Agreement signed on 4 May 1994 and of subsequent agreements, and it must cease procrastinating and postponing the implementation of those agreements and must desist from trying to ignore certain of their provisions.

In this connection, not only the sponsors of the Peace Conference in particular but also the European Union and the international community in general bear a major responsibility and must urge the Israeli Government to comply with the undertakings it has made and to proceed with the rapid implementation in good faith and to the letter of all the agreements concluded on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

This is the ideal solution, and is the only way to counter extremist and fanatical tendencies and repulse the enemies of peace - on whatever side and wherever they may be, and whether they be individuals, parties, agencies or States - so that peace may reign in the land of peace, the Holy Land of Palestine. Failing this, danger threatens the first steps we have taken to secure a genuine Palestinian-Israeli peace that represents both a key to comprehensive peace in the region and a firm foundation for it.

We also urge donor countries quickly to fulfil the financial undertakings given to our people and enable them to move ahead with building and reconstruction and mitigate the bitter suffering of our Palestinian people so that they can perceive the fruits and benefits of the peace process they have chosen and to which they have committed themselves so that they may decide to pursue it resolutely and persistently until the desired goals are reached, including other people's right to freedom, independence and sovereignty.

We are firmly convinced that all friendly and fraternal peoples and States and all those that cherish peace, justice and freedom in the world will steadfastly support our people, will maintain their solidarity of principle with it and will increase their support and backing for it until the achievement of that peace of the brave to which we have committed ourselves on behalf of our people, and whose benefits will encompass our people, all the peoples and States of the region and all the peoples of the world. Hence, we look to the Committee, which has never wavered in making every effort within its power to support us and has been granted great success in carrying out its tasks, to continue to shoulder its worthy burden and step up its activities in support of our people's just struggle by urging the international community to provide increased support and assistance to the Palestinian people and to act in solidarity with it in its long and arduous struggle to achieve real peace in its own land, the blessed land of peace that should be both the gauge and the very exemplar of peace.

I salute you and thank you. I wish your distinguished Committee every success in its worthy tasks.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee

On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour of conveying this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Important developments have continued to take place in the Middle East following the historic signing of the Declaration of Principles. The hope and optimism that the Declaration generated was reinforced by the subsequent signing, in Cairo on 4 May 1994, of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Despite these positive developments, the Government of Israel continues to deny the Special Committee access to the occupied territories - a situation that has remained unchanged since the establishment of the Committee in 1968. The Committee's attempt to carry out a limited visit to the Gaza Strip and Jericho in August 1994, following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority there, did not meet with the approval of the Israeli authorities.

In keeping with past practice, and despite these constraints, the Special Committee has tried to provide a faithful and comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in the occupied territories. Its findings are contained in its twenty-sixth report to the General Assembly (A/49/511).

The Special Committee had hoped that the momentum created by the new situation would be translated into the reality of a truly meaningful culture of respect for human rights in the region. It tried to establish whether the encouraging political developments had generated any significant changes in the general situation affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, as well as in their daily lives. The Committee felt that there are a number of areas where important changes remain to be made if there is to be a genuine improvement.

The principal source of tension in the occupied territories is the continued existence of Israeli settlements and the increasingly violent behaviour of settlers in the wake of the signing of the Declaration of Principles. The most tragic example of acts of violence committed by settlers is the killing of 29 Palestinian worshippers at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron on 25 February 1994, by a settler from Kiryat Arba. A considerable expansion of existing settlements is reported to have taken place, in at least 15 locations, since the signing of the Declaration of Principles.

The Committee welcomes the provision in the Cairo Agreement for the release of about 5,000 Palestinian prisoners. Although most of them have been released, the continued incarceration of approximately 6,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons and detention centres and the alleged deterioration in their conditions of detention is an additional threat to the smooth evolution of the peace process. A particularly preoccupying allegation was that of the continued practice of torture and ill-treatment.

The economic situation of the inhabitants of the occupied territories remains precarious. It has been aggravated further by the closure of the occupied territories imposed by the Israeli authorities after serious security incidents. This closure amounts to collective punishment. Employment in Israel remains the principal source of income for the majority

of the population. Closures have also had a negative impact on the enjoyment of certain fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion.

The Special Committee hopes that the early transfer of responsibilities to the Palestinians in the fields of education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism will constitute a first step in the process of restitution of all the occupied territories and that it will bring about an immediate improvement in the daily lives of the population there. The determination, wisdom and spirit of understanding that led to the signing of the Declaration of Principles and of the Cairo Agreement must be translated into reality through practical compliance with all universally accepted standards of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Special Committee hopes that tangible progress will also be made in the negotiations concerning the occupied Syrian Arab Golan. The Special Committee also hopes that its findings will be taken into account in determining the specific measures designed to give life to the spirit of the recent positive developments. It believes that a positive approach in this regard could further strengthen the peace process, thus enabling all the people of the Middle East to live in harmony, dignity and peace.

MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Tenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, delivered by Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a distinct honour and privilege for me, as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to reaffirm our unflinching support for that people's heroic struggle to attain the inalienable right to self-determination and to establish a sovereign, independent State in its own homeland.

The question of Palestine has always been at the forefront of the deliberations and activities of the Non-Aligned Movement. Individually, every State member of the Movement has assumed as its very own the struggle of the Palestinian people, which is striving for the attainment of its legitimate rights. Their struggle is indeed our struggle. It is undeniable that the Movement as a whole has provided an effective avenue for the collective expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people. In this context, I should like to recall that, since the convening of the historic Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955, followed by the founding of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in 1961, it was universally recognized that the attainment of the rights of the Palestinian people is a *conditio sine que non* for achieving lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. Towards this end, we have consistently called for the strict implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions to bring about a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Significant developments during the past year have bolstered our optimism regarding an end to the long suffering of the Palestinian people. The signing of the historic Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the subsequent Cairo Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area between the PLO and the Government of Israel constitute important milestones in the efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Middle East question, an objective to which the Movement has been committed since its inception.

In the journey towards peace, one of the most dramatic signs of the changing times was reflected in the triumphant and long-awaited return of Chairman Yasser Arafat to the Gaza Strip and Jericho after 27 years in exile. We laud the Palestinian leadership for its foresight and wisdom in taking these crucial initial steps for the cause of peace. It is our earnest hope that every gesture towards peace made by the Palestinians will be reciprocated by Israel, and that efforts in overcoming the enmity, injustice and mutual suspicion that have long plagued the region will prevail; for, notwithstanding the successes achieved so far, the road ahead is still strewn with numerous obstacles and difficulties.

Decades of Israeli occupation have not only inflicted immense hardship on the Palestinian people, but have also destroyed basic infrastructures in the occupied territories. Concerted and determined efforts are therefore essential to overcome these challenges. In this regard, we firmly believe that the international community bears a solemn responsibility to extend full assistance to the nascent Palestinian Authority to enable it to implement the policies necessary for better living conditions in the occupied territories. It is beyond doubt that political, social and economic

development are interdependent and vital to long-term stability. In this context, we are gratified by the recent appoint of the United Nations Special Coordinator to provide overall guidance and facilitate effective coordination of international assistance to the Palestinian people in meeting both their immediate and their long-term needs.

However, the task of transforming Gaza and Jericho from areas of conflict and poverty into areas of peace and prosperity should not divert attention from other problems that have engulfed the region. In this connection, it is essential to ensure that positive results emanate from the ongoing negotiations concerning the extension of Palestinian self-rule throughout the West Bank, including Jerusalem. Furthermore, while we welcome the progress recently achieved on the Israel-Jordan track of negotiations, as reflected in the signing of the Washington Declaration on 25 July 1994, comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East requires progress along other tracks in Arab-Israeli negotiations too. We therefore reaffirm that a lasting settlement of this question must entail the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; from the Syrian Golan Heights and from other occupied Jordanian and Lebanese territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders; the recognition and exercise of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). We also urge Israel to adhere, in the occupied territories, to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention to restore human rights; and to lift the restrictions that have for so long impeded the political, economic, social and cultural activities of the Palestinian people.

At this critical juncture in the destiny of the Palestinian people, we deem it essential for the United Nations to remain seized of the question of Palestine and to play a central role in the peace process, for what is at stake is not only the future of an entire people, but also peace, security and stability in the region and beyond.

In commemorating this solemn occasion, let us reaffirm our commitment to leaving no stone unturned to restore the usurped rights of the Palestinian people. The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to lend its unwavering support to the Palestinian people and to the PLO, their sole representative, as they begin to rebuild their lives and nation. We remain convinced that they will emerge victorious.

Finally, I should like to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its determined efforts in mobilizing world public opinion for the achievement of the sacred Palestinian cause, namely, the effective exercise of their sovereignty in the already proclaimed Palestinian State.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, delivered by Mr. Shaukat Umer, Representative of Pakistan

Solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for their just cause was the main inspiration for the creation of the Islamic Conference. The establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) bears testimony to the deep commitment of the Islamic world to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and nationhood. Since its creation 25 years ago, OIC has consistently supported the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people and promoted their legitimate interests and aspirations.

The Palestinians have recently acquired self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. It is our earnest hope that the Middle East peace process will culminate soon in the realization of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State. OIC will continue to extend its wholehearted support to the Palestinian people in their endeavour to achieve this objective. OIC accords central importance to the restoration of Al-Quds al-Sharif to Muslim sovereignty in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. For a lasting and comprehensive peace, it is imperative that Israel must demonstrate its sincerity and commitment to the basic norms of peace and justice in its relationship with the Palestinian people.

The people of Palestine need vital economic assistance to recover from long years of occupation. The United Nations and its specialized agencies must offer full cooperation to enable them to rebuild their economy and develop their national institutions. The international community should also come forward with tangible measures of support for the rehabilitation of the Palestinian territories.

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of Tunisia,
in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity,
delivered by Mr. Slaheddine Abdellah, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

As we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we have witnessed some radical changes on the route towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for the Palestinian people, notably Israel's recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the signing of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993 in Washington.

Now that the Palestine National Authority is exercising its mandate over Gaza and Jericho and there is a beginning to Palestinian self-rule, we feel more optimistic about the Palestinian people's attainment of its inalienable rights, first and foremost its right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on its land.

The Middle East region is the cradle of human religions and civilizations. It is a crucial geographic area of the world and deserves peace and security. It deserves to be able to build the future of its peoples on the basis of friendly relations between neighbouring countries and peoples, including the valiant Palestinian people, on the basis of equality and justice.

Today, we should like to express our appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee has always epitomized international solidarity. On this occasion, we should like to reaffirm our continuing support for the ongoing and noble efforts, on the basis of the solidarity between all peace-loving countries and founded on justice, that have been undertaken by the Organization, since its inception, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights and assuage its suffering.

The valiant Palestinian people are steadfastly facing the enormous challenge involved in its exercise of its sovereignty, rebuilding its land and establishing the national institutions that will be the nucleus for an independent State. Such a State would enable the Palestinian people to live peace as a reality and to return to the fold of the international community.

A lasting, comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without support for the Palestine National Authority in its efforts to rebuild after decades of occupation and conflict. Here, we should like to emphasize our commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and the exercise of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, as well as our support for the principle of freedom. Thus, we are committed to supporting the Palestinian National Authority.

We call on the international community once again, especially the donor community, to increase its efforts in support of the Palestinian people. We also wish to highlight the very important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People towards the ultimate goal of the Palestinian people's enjoying its inalienable rights and establishing an independent State with its capital in Jerusalem, in conformity with all relevant international resolutions.

Peace requires a great deal of perseverance and sincerity, and a commitment to the rules of open dialogue. The United Nations has a great responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security worldwide, and it should accord due priority to the Palestinian cause, which is a just cause and the key to peace and security in the Middle East.

We shall continue to support all efforts aimed at establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We express our very best wishes for the success of the Committee's work in its role of helping achieve peace and security in the region.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, delivered by Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

As we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am pleased to express my great appreciation for the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in its efforts to arrive at a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and to defend the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is its right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State on its national homeland.

We fully appreciate the fact that the Committee has consistently called upon Israel, the occupying State, to desist from its attempts to alter the demographic or geographical conditions in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in the holy city of Jerusalem. The Committee has also urged Israel to comply with international resolutions in this respect, and has considered all administrative and legislative measures taken by the occupation authorities as null and void and as an impediment to peace.

Here I should like to stress the danger of Israel's persistence in taking steps that run contrary to the letter and spirit of the peace process, which has come to constitute the great hope and aspiration of the Arab peoples. There is no doubt that the Israeli occupation authorities are continuing to take provocative measures - such as the closure of the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron in the West Bank following the massacre committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinian worshippers - in flagrant violation of international law. Israel has recently divided the mosque and given the larger part of it to Jewish worshippers who belong to extremist groups. There is no doubt that such measures are in flagrant violation of the sanctity of holy places, and are likely to create many factors for instability and suspicion in the region.

It is also deplorable to have to note that the Israeli authorities have continued to expand and intensify the establishment of settlements in the occupied West Bank, particularly around the holy city of Jerusalem. This raises a great deal of suspicion concerning Israel's commitment, seriousness and real intentions *vis-à-vis* the peace process.

Developments in the region clearly indicate the eagerness of Arab countries to establish the foundations for a just and comprehensive peace. The peace sought by the Arab countries is one based on justice and founded on a commitment to the implementation of international law in the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the principle of land for peace. It is also based on the recognition of the legitimate, just rights of the Palestinian people.

More than a year has passed since the signing of the Agreement on Principles, on 13 September 1993 in Washington, between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. The Council of the League of Arab States considers that Agreement to be a first important step towards the implementation of the principle of land for peace. Its signing was an important development in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Council of the League adopted its resolution 5092 on 12 September 1992, before the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference. In that resolution, it welcomed the international and regional efforts aimed at the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and expressed its support for the position of the Arab parties involved in all stages of the peace process.

All these developments compel this Committee, which plays an important part in the activities of the world Organization, to pursue and intensify its efforts towards the consolidation of the peace process so as to enable the achievement of a definitive and just solution to the Palestinian question in all its aspects. Hence the importance of supporting the autonomous Palestinian Authority, which has assumed its responsibilities in Gaza and Jericho in extremely difficult and complex economic and social circumstances. In order to ensure the success of this experiment in Palestinian self-rule, on the basis of which the future of the entire peace process in all its tracks depends, I urge the Committee to pursue its efforts to urge the United Nations and the international community, particularly the donor countries, to shoulder their responsibilities towards the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority and extend all forms of support to enable the Authority to take on the challenge of economic and social development.

It might be appropriate here, Mr. Chairman, for the Committee to issue a statement in this respect on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity. I am confident that the Committee will spare no effort in continuing its support for the Palestinian people and its national leadership, impelled by its eagerness to restore their legitimate rights to the Palestinians and by its support for the peace process.

In conclusion, I wish the Committee every success in its work.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Mr. Larry Ekin, Vice-Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, and Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

For the second consecutive year, I am privileged to accept an invitation to address this solemn gathering. I do so on behalf of my colleagues in the International Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, as well as the North American Coordinating Committee, which I am privileged to chair. I extend greetings on behalf of Mr. Don Betz, the International Chairman, as well as my own colleagues and constituents on the North American Committee.

For the NGO community and, I would imagine, for the Committee as well, this has been a year of rapid constant change and adjustment. Nearly every day brings new developments, requiring new adjustments.

At the outset, allow me to affirm the ongoing commitment of solidarity with the Palestinian people represented by the organized NGO movements, in North America as well as internationally.

I should also like to acknowledge the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and also that of the Division for Palestinian Rights. We believe that our work as NGOs with these bodies within the United Nations system represents a dynamic and creative partnership. Working together for more than a decade now, we have learned a great deal about supporting one another's efforts and mobilizing resources. We are hopeful that this innovative partnership will continue to serve the Palestinian people.

We remain mindful that, despite the emergence of the Palestinian National Authority, the goals that we have articulated and supported through the years have yet to be achieved. Thus, we continue to focus our attention on the plight of those Palestinians still living directly under Israeli occupation. We find ourselves distressed by reports reaching us of growing humanitarian needs, constant depletion of resources and an economy choked by political restrictions. We continue to view with apprehension the building and expanding of Israeli settlements in large segments of the occupied territories and, in particular, we believe that steps taken by the Government of Israel in Jerusalem and its environs are prejudicial to any realistic peace process, and, in the final analysis, will prove destructive. We continue to monitor the situation of prisoners, and urge the Government of Israel to hasten the release of Palestinian political prisoners.

We further stand with our Palestinian brothers and sisters in urging the international community to expedite the transfer of funds and resources that will assist the Palestinian people in developing their infrastructure and their civil society. We are hopeful that we will see a renewed commitment to nurturing the seeds of peace.

We further believe that the United Nations and the international community have a real and continuing role to play in relation to the refugees, wherever they may be.

I have already mentioned Jerusalem, and may do so several more times before I finish my remarks. We in the NGO community know that there are Israelis and Palestinians searching for creative solutions to this very difficult political problem. We believe that the Committee and the international community can play an important role in supporting and facilitating these discussions and the search for creative solutions. Equally, or perhaps more importantly, we believe that there is an ongoing need for international monitoring of developments related to the situation. In all these situations, we believe that the NGO community includes people with expertise and resources that will allow us to pursue a creative partnership. We stand ready to assist the Committee in these endeavours.

I have mentioned that a constituency of people exists who continue to be interested in the Palestinian people. Those people continue to look to this Committee for guidance, inspiration and leadership, and we hope that they will find it.

In North America, well over a hundred active NGOs remain affiliated with our Committee. They range in size from very large, national institutions to small, grass-roots, community-based organizations. Some representatives may have heard reports from the symposium we conducted this summer in Toronto. We believe that this was one of the best meetings we have ever organized in cooperation with this Committee, and again emphasized the ongoing attention to this issue of people from throughout North America and internationally.

At that meeting, we received input and benefited immensely from our counterparts in Palestinian NGOs. Again, some representatives may be aware that over this past summer, meetings involving Palestinian NGOs took place throughout the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. These involved more than 600 Palestinian organizations as the Palestinian NGOs stepped forward to identify their concerns and priorities. The input from these meetings benefited our deliberations, and we hope that this process will continue.

We are well aware that, as the Palestinian National Authority grows and extends its area of influence, some of these Palestinian NGOs will be absorbed into the national framework. At the same time, some of them will choose to remain NGOs. We want to continue to support Palestinian NGOs and their work, and we are hopeful that the Palestinian National Authority will evolve with a flexible attitude that will allow the maximum possible contribution by the NGOs to the Palestinian people and to their social and economic development.

While this is neither the time nor the place to pursue this topic in detail, I would note that, as a community of NGOs, we do have concerns. We believe that the NGO community has exercised a positive and supportive influence over a period of more than 40 years. Many of our constituent organizations were on the scene before Governments arrived, even before the United Nations was able to mobilize its resources. We hope that we will be able to continue this productive partnership with the Palestinian people.

At the same time, we acknowledge that we are perhaps experiencing some growing pains. We are hopeful that these will prove to be merely that - a period of adjustment to new roles, new realities and the development of new but still respectful relations.

If we have concerns, we also have confidence because we have confidence in the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people have laboured for too many years, endured too many sacrifices and adhered to democratic ideals for too long for their society not to put these principles into practice in their daily political life.

Looking back over the past year, how many of us here could have predicted the events that have taken place? Looking ahead, how many of us can believe that we can predict with any confidence what will occur? And so, between today and tomorrow, let us renew our pledge to adhere to the principles that we have supported for so many years. Let us stand today in renewed commitment to upholding those principles which this body has articulated through the years. Let us move forward in a spirit of cooperation, with a determination to pursue peace with justice and in the understanding that the fruits of this peace must produce benefits not only for the people of Israel and Palestine but indeed for the entire region and the whole world.

III. MESSAGES RECEIVED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

A. Messages from heads of State or Government

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Burhan-ud-din Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 29 November 1994, I would like to express the sincere wishes of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and of the entire Afghan people for the satisfactory final settlement of the question of Palestine based on the full achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination and to have their own State, requiring the complete withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian territory, including Al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem).

ALGERIA

Mr. Liamine Zeroual, President of Algeria

[Original: Arabic]

First, I would like to express my great appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its valuable contribution and its indefatigable efforts to mobilize the moral and political support of the international community for the just cause of the people of Palestine.

The General Assembly resolution which declared that 29 November should, each year, be the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is the clearest possible indication of the United Nations' awareness of its historic responsibility towards a people on whom the greatest injustice of modern times has fallen.

The United Nations' choice of this day is a manifestation of its desire, which has been evident since 1974, to assume its full role in enabling this people to enjoy its established rights, especially its right to return to its land, and its right to self-determination and to establish its own State on its national territory.

I should also like to reiterate the determination of the Algerian people and Government to continue to support the Palestinian people, under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and to spare no efforts to achieve the aims of General Assembly resolutions relating to the question of Palestine, in the light of the positive developments seen in the Middle East region. Those must be reinforced, in order to move forward towards the realization of the goals agreed upon by the international community.

Algeria firmly believes that the enjoyment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights would pave the way for the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region, thereby enabling the region to concentrate all efforts on the well-being of its peoples.

Algeria is certain that this matter is well understood by every peace-loving State and people, from which the Palestinian people finds increasing support for its just cause.

I am hopeful that this day, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, will be a suitable occasion for peace-loving States and peoples to demonstrate their belief that all peoples subject to foreign domination should exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I should like to salute all the States which are members of the Committee, and to commend fraternal Senegal for its commitment to this sacred cause, providing as it has such effective and sustained leadership for the Committee and demonstrating thereby the spirit of solidarity which makes national policies and initiatives secondary to the common interest.

BANGLADESH

Mrs. Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

On this auspicious occasion I, on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh, reaffirm our total commitment and unequivocal support to the inalienable national rights of the Palestinians, including a State of their own.

It is heartening to note that, pursuant to the accord signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government in Washington in September 1993, a Palestinian Self-Rule Authority has been established under the inspiring leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. We welcomed this as a first step in the resolution of the problems in the Middle East and the core issue of Palestine. Yet the Palestinian Self-Rule Authority is hamstrung by some procedural problems. The Israeli settlements are yet to be dismantled and their occupation of Palestinian lands are still persisting. The economy of the Palestinian Self-Rule entity is regulated by the Israeli Government. None the less, we are encouraged by the overwhelming support the Palestinian people is enjoying in its drive towards achieving statehood and we call upon the international community to strengthen its efforts to help the Palestinians achieve their ultimate goal.

We firmly believe that the resolution of the Palestinian problem will reinforce the current momentum for peaceful resolution of all other problems in the Middle East, including withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories. We take this opportunity to reiterate our unflinching support for the Palestinian people in its efforts to realize its cherished dreams.

CHINA

Mr. Li Peng,
Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the convocation of the conference marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our warm congratulations to the conference.

Significant changes have taken place in the Middle East since the last conference. Palestine has already effected self-rule in Gaza and Jericho while a peace treaty was signed between Jordan and Israel. Recently, the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit was held in Morocco. This is a positive achievement in the Middle East peace process and a major step towards the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and the realization of peace in the Middle East. It is hoped that the parties concerned in the Middle East will continue to take a flexible and pragmatic approach so as to work for an early restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and realization of peace and development in the Middle East.

China follows very closely the developments in the Middle East and has all along supported the just cause of the Palestinian people. It will continue to make its own contributions, together with the international community, to the final settlement of the Middle East question, including the Palestinian issue, in a comprehensive, fair and reasonable manner.

COLOMBIA

Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia

[Original: Spanish]

We have the honour to convey to you, for your transmittal to the Palestinian people, the expression of the support of the Government of Colombia for the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We have followed with the greatest attention and interest the development of the process that began in Madrid in 1991, and we could do no less than congratulate you for the significant advances that have been achieved for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

CUBA

Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is marked this year by awareness of the arduous task it will be to implement properly the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area concluded on 4 May 1994 between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We are cognizant of the many obstacles to be overcome before the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are recognized and fully exercised, especially its right to self-determination, including the establishment of an independent State of its own. To achieve this, it is indispensable at this stage that the Palestinian Authority, which is to govern during this five-year transitional period, receive the broadest possible international economic cooperation so that it can meet the enormous needs accumulated by the population of those territories over long years of Israeli occupation.

It is incumbent upon the international community to redouble its efforts to guarantee that the agreements which have been concluded contribute to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, on the basis of all relevant United Nations resolutions, enabling the rights of the hard-pressed Palestinian people to be fully restored and the Arab countries to recover the territories occupied by Israel.

Cuba reiterates its commitment to the achievement of peace with justice and dignity for all peoples in the Middle East and joins the many nations which deem it an honour to have Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, present at the commemorative meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations as the representative of his heroic people.

Giving full value, Sir, to your important work at the helm of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to assure you once again that you may count upon our firmest cooperation in the performance of such an honourable task.

CYPRUS

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

On the solemn occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish on behalf of the people of Cyprus, my Government and myself to reaffirm our unwavering support to the Palestinian people and its leadership for success.

The current positive developments, highlighted by the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the ensuing negotiations for its implementation, raise tenable hopes for the realization of the demands and aspirations of the Palestinian people. Indeed, the Middle East peace process heightens expectations for building lasting peace, security and stability throughout the Middle East, which will benefit all peoples in the region.

Cyprus firmly supports the current advances on the road to peace, and hopes that all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict will seize the unprecedented opportunities offered for reaching a just and viable solution to the Middle East problem.

We share the international concern for the plight of the Palestinian people and accord great significance and support the need for massive international economic aid to be given without delay to the Palestinian Administration in order to solve the serious economic problems it faces and to establish the necessary infrastructure needed to improve the standard of living and create prosperity for the Palestinian people.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Central People's Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

[addressed to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization]

The Central People's Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends firm solidarity to you and the Palestinian people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, have waged ceaseless struggle to restore its legitimate national rights.

The Korean people will always extend active support and encouragement to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

We take this opportunity to wish you and the Palestinian people greater success in the struggle for a final solution of the Palestinian question and express our conviction that the friendly relations between our two countries will further strengthen and develop.

EGYPT

Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

[Original: Arabic]

I am happy to extend our thanks to you and to all the members of the Committee for your great effort in support of the Palestinian people and the achievement of its legitimate rights, as endorsed by numerous resolutions of the United Nations and its various organs, and for your positive and effective role in the unceasing endeavour to publicize the cause of that people and promote awareness in world public opinion of its legitimate rights.

The observance this year of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People comes at a time when the light of peace shines daily on an ever greater expanse of a region that has for long been the scene of bloody wars. With agreement on the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles in 1993, the peace process has continued to advance over the past year, and the two sides signed the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area in Cairo on 4 May 1994. The negotiations between the two are still under way in Cairo with a view to reaching agreement on the remaining provisions of the Declaration of Principles; the world has recently been witness to the signing of the Treaty of Peace between Jordan and Israel; and progress is expected to be made in negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

In Egypt, we feel pride and satisfaction, of course, when we perceive that our country's efforts to advance the peace process in the region over the past two decades have begun to bear fruit and promise to lead to a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. We hope that such a peace will be a necessary prelude to the achievement of cooperation between the States and peoples of the region so as to create a more secure and relaxed Middle East. We believe that the Palestinian people will be capable of playing an important role in that context when it is able to exercise its independent will.

At this important stage in its history, when it is on its way to securing the restoration of its legitimate national rights and as it prepares itself to exercise some of these rights in a part of its territory, the Palestinian people is in the most pressing need of the tireless efforts of men of good will and of those who cherish peace and it requires all forms of assistance in the political, economic and other fields. We in Egypt have made the resolve to stand behind the Palestinian people and ensure for it a future of dignity on the political and economic map of the Middle East region pending a peaceful, just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

On this occasion, we call upon your distinguished Committee to expand and step up its laudable efforts and endeavours until such time as the Palestinian people achieves full freedom on its national soil, including East Jerusalem, and until this region of the world is once again a place of tolerance, love and peace and of all the exalted values of the three divinely revealed religions with which it has been graced. Let us hold fast to this historic opportunity to achieve

peace, and may the international community close ranks to guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as the cornerstone of the success of peace efforts in the region. There can be no doubt that the efforts of your Committee will continue to make their contribution to the achievement of these worthy objectives.

We reiterate our constant readiness to cooperate with you on the road taken, and we wish you every success in your endeavours.

GUINEA

Mr. Lansana Conte, President of the Republic of Guinea

[Original: French]

As in past years, it is my duty, on behalf of the People and Government of Guinea, to extend my sincerest congratulations on the eminently positive role which our Committee is continuing to play with regard to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, a question which remains the cornerstone of the conflict in the Middle East. In that connection the Government of Guinea welcomes the recent developments occurring in the region which, beginning with the signature of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993, augur well for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for all the countries of the Middle East within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. I wish to reassure you of the great importance which my country, as a member of the Committee since its establishment, attaches to these lofty peace objectives, to the attainment of which it remains anxious to make its modest contribution.

INDIA

Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People demonstrates the support of the world community for the people of Palestine in its quest for peace and justice in West Asia. On this occasion, India reiterates its commitment to the cause of peace in West Asia and the realization of the legitimate goals and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

India has welcomed the return of Chairman Arafat to Gaza and Jericho, and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority there. We reaffirm our support and solidarity for it and wish it success in its future tasks.

India has always advocated a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute through negotiations. Now that the Middle East peace process has acquired momentum, we trust that the lead provided by the Palestinian people will bring peace and tranquillity to all of West Asia.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an opportune time to reconfirm the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people aimed at attaining its inalienable rights and to offer greetings on behalf of the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran and on my own behalf to the pure spirits of the martyrs of the Palestinian revolutionary struggle. We wish the freedom fighters striving to liberate this sacred territory increasing success.

The question of Palestine and the aggressive policies of the Zionist regime have been on the agenda of the United Nations longer than any other issue and are still salient. Despite the adoption of repeated resolutions, this crisis remains the most serious one in the Middle East. It is also the largest obstacle to creating an atmosphere of trust and the source of a lack of confidence in the region.

The question of Palestine has not only engaged the minds and emotions of the world's Muslims, it has also attracted the attention of every freedom-loving individual in search of justice. Owing to the inhumane practices of the occupying regime and the supportive policies of the super-Powers on one hand, and the double standards applied to this situation by the international organizations on the other, not even the most basic rights of the people of Palestine have yet been realized.

Following years of untold suffering, deprivation and torture, the national uprising of the people of Palestine which was initiated only to attain its trampled rights encountered the most inhuman response from the forces of the Zionist regime.

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to fully support the struggle of the oppressed people of Palestine and its defence against the oppressive practices of the Zionist regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the opinion that the recent events which have unfolded under the guise of the peace process will not lead to lasting peace and security in the region, because the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine have been neglected.

The Islamic Republic of Iran calls upon the international community to fulfil its primary obligation, i.e., opposing aggression, and to end the application of double standards by confronting the occupying forces with seriousness. The history of the Palestinian crisis is illustrative of the reality that only the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian Government in the entire land of Palestine will return peace and security in the region. It is hoped, therefore, that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be a step towards the realization of such a reality.

JORDAN

King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am pleased to convey to you and to the members of the Committee our sincere gratitude and acclaim for your sustained efforts to promote the cause of the Palestinian people at the international level in order to help it achieve its objective of securing its inalienable rights and, primarily, its right to exercise self-determination on the soil of its homeland. I should further like to affirm the support of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the decisions taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and for the agreements it has reached with Israel, to confirm the distinctive relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples and to stress Jordan's readiness to assist the Palestinian Authority in its activities since it assumed its responsibilities in Gaza and Jericho in implementation of the agreement signed by the PLO and Israel. We hope that the remaining provisions of the agreement will be implemented pending arrival at the stage for negotiations between the two parties on the permanent status. We also hope that the Committee and the relevant organs of the United Nations will contribute to the international effort to assist the Palestinian Authority in performing its functions, particularly during the transitional period.

I should here like to state that the Treaty of Peace concluded by Jordan and Israel, after it has passed through all the necessary constitutional procedures, will be a major step in the endeavour for a comprehensive and just peace based on international legitimacy and will give the peoples of the region an opportunity to work for progress and prosperity in security and tranquillity.

It should be recalled that Jordan has always been in the forefront in supporting the fraternal Palestinian people and in providing its representatives with the assistance and support they need in their endeavour to secure their rights on the soil of their homeland.

Regarding the recent clashes between Palestinian brothers in Gaza and the occupied territories with pain and concern, Jordan affirms the need for Palestinian unity, for recourse to be had to a democratic and balanced national dialogue in order to resolve any differences arising between the Palestinian parties and for the rejection of any resort to violence, which leads only to further counter-violence.

In conclusion, please accept our gratitude and appreciation for your worthy efforts for the sake of the national and political rights of the Palestinian people, efforts that stem from your commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international legitimacy.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr. Nouhak Phoumsavanh, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: French]

On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and on my own behalf, to express my warmest congratulations to you and to the other members of the Committee on the determination and dedication with which you are discharging your lofty and highly responsible duties.

The situation in the Middle East as a whole is improving. The agreement on self-government for Gaza and Jericho, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, followed by the recent establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, represent an important milestone in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We salute this great step forward and hope that it will open the way for an overall solution of the problem.

The Lao Government and people warmly welcome the mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel. It is our sincere hope that it will help to enable the various parties to the conflict to establish mutual trust and to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement acceptable to all in the context of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the other relevant United Nations resolutions. We thus express the hope that, under the resolute leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Palestinian people will achieve even greater successes in its persistent struggle to reclaim its fundamental national rights.

On this solemn occasion, the Lao Government and people wish to reaffirm their active solidarity with the Palestinian people in its arduous struggle for the triumph of its just cause. They appeal to the international community to make every effort and do all in its power to assist this martyred people to enjoy the full exercise of its inalienable lawful rights.

MALAYSIA

Mr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

The international community is once again commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On this occasion, the Government and the people of Malaysia wish to reiterate their unequivocal support and solidarity with the Palestinian people in the exercise of its inalienable national rights to self-determination and to establish its independent Palestinian State.

Malaysia, like the other members of the United Nations, is pleased with the assumption by the Palestinian National Authority of its tasks in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. We view this as a first step towards the full realization and of a just and comprehensive settlement leading to the withdrawal of Israel from Al-Quds al-Sharif and all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. We recognize that the situation on the ground has not been satisfactory. We urge the Israeli Government to demonstrate its sincerity in the implementation of the peace accord. We call upon the Member States to play their role in support of the just cause of Palestine and to support the peace process in order to ensure its progress and success.

Malaysia recognizes that both bilateral and multilateral assistance for the development and reconstruction of the West Bank and Gaza is of crucial importance for Palestinian self-rule. Indeed, it is critical to the subsequent progress in the peace process as well as the future of Palestine and the whole of the Middle East region. We urge member countries to extend economic, material and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period so as to consolidate its national authority and reconstruct its institutions and economy. Malaysia would render whatever assistance within our means to help the Palestinians in their endeavour towards that end.

On this auspicious occasion, once again I wish to reiterate our support for the Palestinian cause in the quest by the Palestinian people for self-determination and to establish its own independent State. It is our hope that all member countries will continue to resolutely support the Palestinian people in the realization of its noble and just cause.

MEXICO

Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of the United Mexican States

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Mexico join the international community in reaffirming their support for the peace process currently under way in the Middle East.

Mexico welcomes the readiness displayed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel to achieve, through dialogue and negotiation, a just and lasting peace in the region which will guarantee the effective exercise of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the right of all States to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

The peace process is fundamental to the attainment of common objectives with a view to facilitating the transition towards mutual respect and cooperation in the Middle East in future.

NICARAGUA

Mrs. Violeta Barrio de Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua

[Original: Spanish]

Nicaragua, a peace-loving country devoted to the peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, has never hesitated to support, in any of the competent forums, the search for a genuine peace process in the Middle East, in order that the Palestinian population might enjoy the peace for which it has fought so hard.

Nicaragua welcomes with satisfaction the progress made in the peace process begun at the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, as well as the agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel.

As we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like to express once again our solidarity with the Palestinian people and our conviction that peace, in Palestine as in the entire Middle East, is no longer a Utopia but a historic and irreversible event in which the whole international community can take pleasure.

PAKISTAN

Mrs. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan

As we mark this Day of Solidarity with our Palestinian brethren, I would like to reaffirm the complete solidarity of the Government and people of Pakistan with the cause of the Palestinian nation. We would like to assure our Palestinian brothers of our continuing support for their just cause. We hope peace and progress will soon be achieved in Palestine and will culminate in the realization of the just aspirations of the Palestinian people for sovereign nationhood.

Pakistan has welcomed the agreements concluded within the framework of the Middle East peace process. The real success of this process will hinge on the implementation of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Israel must demonstrate its sincerity and commitment to the basic norms of peace and justice in its relationship with the Palestinian people. It is our sincere hope that, despite the disturbing developments of the past few days, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people will be soon realized and Al-Quds al-Sharif will be restored to Muslim sovereignty.

The people of Palestine need adequate economic assistance to recover from long years of occupation. The United Nations and its specialized agencies must offer full cooperation to enable them to rebuild their economy and develop their national institutions. The international community should also come forward with concrete measures of support for the rehabilitation of the Palestinian territories.

PANAMA

Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares, President of the Republic of Panama

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Panama convey their heartfelt greetings and express their solidarity with the Palestinian people as a gesture of support and encouragement for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Government and people of Panama are aware that of all the ills afflicting mankind, deprivation of liberty and injustice are one of the bitterest chapters in its history of suffering.

The Government and people of Panama see the long and arduous struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination not only in terms of that people's inalienable right, but also as a matter of the utmost priority for the international community.

The Government and people of Panama are heartened by the recent agreements as well as by the action taken and commitments made since September 1993, which augur well for peace in the Middle East in the near future.

The Government and people of Panama hope that the comprehensive settlement which the United Nations is promoting through its resolutions and which the international community supports through its adherence to the principles of international law will bring about a just and lasting peace in which the Palestinian people may find its rightful place and enjoy freedom and independence.

PHILIPPINES

Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines

On behalf of the Philippine Government and the Filipino people, I join the United Nations and the international community in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Philippines fully supports the ongoing peace process and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements aimed at resolving the Palestinian issue, which remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We hope, as the process continues, that it will be accompanied by confidence-building measures so as to strengthen it and ensure its viability. The Philippines looks forward to the completion of the process in terms of the establishment of a fully independent Palestinian State which, in turn, would be a major step towards arriving at a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

I congratulate the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its untiring efforts in advancing the cause of Palestine and its people, and in enhancing the international awareness and recognition of that cause.

QATAR

Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased to address you on this important occasion, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, a solidarity that has advanced the cause of this militant people by virtue of the world's belief in the justice of its cause and in its inalienable rights, especially the right to self-determination and to establish an independent State on the soil of the Palestinian homeland that has been washed by the blood of tens of thousands of its innocent martyrs. This long-suffering people has been deprived of the most basic human rights enjoyed by every member of our international Organization.

We observe this year's Day of Solidarity at the dawn of a new era, with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the land of Palestine following the implementation of the Declaration of Principles agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel, a product of the peace process in the Middle East, which enjoys widespread international support and which we hope will yield further achievements in all tracks following the signing of the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel.

At this turning-point in the history of the Palestinian people, the State of Qatar affirms the responsibility of the international community to support the full and unequivocal national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, which the State of Qatar, just like other Islamic States, considers to be of the utmost importance in any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict because of the lofty status of Jerusalem in the minds of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

We view as an auspicious development the establishment of a self-rule authority in part of the land of Palestine and we hope that Israel will take speedy action in the peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization to extend Palestinian self-rule to the whole of Palestinian territory and to every aspect of the economic, social and cultural development of the Palestinian people so that it can build up essential infrastructure, most of which was destroyed by the Israeli occupation. It is a task for which all countries everywhere bear a shared responsibility. The holding of elections throughout Palestinian territory should also be expedited in implementation of the main provisions of the Declaration of Principles in support of the Palestinian national entity. We hope that Israel will place no obstacles in the way of this process and that it will show understanding for the requirements of this important stage of the Palestinian peace process so that it may proceed smoothly towards its anticipated goal.

In conclusion, I should like to convey my gratitude and appreciation to all participants in this event and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman for their laudable work. I wish the Committee further success until such time as the Palestinian people enjoys its rights to the full and, God willing, establishes an independent State of its own some day soon.

May peace be upon you and the mercy of God and his blessings.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

[Addressed to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have pleasure in sending cordial congratulations and very best wishes to you and all Palestinians.

There is a feeling of special satisfaction in the Russian Federation that this year has been marked by an important breakthrough in efforts to achieve an Arab-Israeli settlement and the solution of its core problem - the question of Palestine. Historic agreements, which lay the foundation for peaceful, non-confrontational development in the region, have been signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, under the co-sponsorship of the Russian Federation and the United States of America. With the establishment of a Palestinian National Authority in Gaza and Jericho, a start has been made in achieving the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Russian Federation will continue to provide all possible support to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in the interests of the early establishment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

I sincerely wish the Palestinian people progress, well-being and prosperity.

SAUDI ARABIA

Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King of Saudi Arabia

[Original: Arabic]

On this day each year, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the international community has adopted the custom of affirming through your Committee its support for the Palestinian people and the defence of its usurped rights. We value the efforts of the Committee in this domain, and we take the opportunity to express our full support for this international trend and to highlight some important aspects of the issue that merit review on an occasion such as this.

That the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should associate itself with the international community in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is a natural extension of the positions it has historically adopted to convey the full range of its solidarity with the Palestinian people and to provide, to the best of its ability, the assistance and support necessary to enable that people to extricate itself from its plight and regain the exercise of its usurped rights. Since the Palestine issue first emerged, Saudi Arabia has done everything in its power to provide all manner of support to the Palestinian people, given the Kingdom's belief in the justice of the cause and given the duties imposed upon it by the bonds of the Islamic religion and the demands of inter-Arab responsibility. In this context, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Palestinians and the Israelis in Washington on 13 September 1993 as representing a first and pioneering step towards a peaceful, just and lasting settlement to the question of Palestine. It has also affirmed on a number of occasions that the issue of Jerusalem represents the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that there can therefore be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a just solution to that issue that takes account of the relevant United Nations resolutions and that any permanent and comprehensive settlement must address the issue of the return of the Palestine refugees and that of Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

Desiring to translate its words into deeds and seeking to strengthen the peace process, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in the international conference of donors held in Washington in October 1993 and pledged the sum of $100 million to the World Bank programme to meet the urgent development needs of the Palestinian economy. It also assisted the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority with transport for the Palestinian Police in taking over its assigned locations and in training the force to perform its functions.

With the agreement reached on the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Palestinian and Israeli sides, with the steps subsequently taken to give effect to the agreement by means of the Cairo Declaration signed by the two sides on 9 February 1994 and with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, the easing of the situation with respect to this issue is a step towards ending the tragedy and making the language of dialogue and negotiation the optimum means of solving the outstanding problems in the region. The Palestinian side is desirous of securing its rights and giving effect to them, and the Israeli side is more than ever required to translate its agreement with the Palestinians into tangible reality and to assist in establishing a comprehensive peace in the region. The international community, and in particular the United States of America and the Russian Federation, the co-sponsors of the Peace Conference, must bring pressure to bear on the Israeli leadership to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to observe the principle of land for peace as agreed at the Madrid Peace Conference.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes this opportunity to stress that the Palestinians must be accorded their rights with dispatch and without procrastination and that all obstacles to a just and comprehensive solution must be removed if the desired peace is to be secured.

We pray God to grant success to all and guide their steps aright.

SENEGAL

Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal

[Original: French]

The process which began in 1991 with the Madrid Conference truly opened a new chapter in the history of the Middle East with the signing at Washington on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and its Agreed Minutes, by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel.

Senegal, together with the rest of the international community, has hailed the historic significance of this fundamental Agreement and the substantial progress achieved throughout the past year in the implementation of its provisions relating to the transitional period.

This glimmer of hope was magnified considerably with the signing at Cairo on 4 May 1994 of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, which led to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from those areas of the occupied Palestinian territory, the triumphant and historic return of President Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders to Gaza and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

The Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, signed at Erez on 29 August 1994, also reflects the determination of the parties concerned to reach a peaceful and negotiated settlement, a noble initiative which Senegal will continue to support steadfastly, as it has in the past.

Of course, serious obstacles of all kinds, largely related to the complexity of the process and the enormity of the stakes, are still to be found along the road to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. I remain convinced, however, that through the courage and wisdom of Palestinian and Israeli leaders, and with the help of the community, the desire for peace, reconciliation and cooperation will overcome any reluctance of the moment.

It is thus important that the Palestinian and Israeli leaders pursue their negotiations with resolve in order to bring about the prompt and full implementation of the Washington Agreements; respect for the spirit and letter of those Agreements is the best guarantee for the establishment of a just and lasting peace on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In this crucial phase of the peace process, I wish to reaffirm the responsibility of the United Nations, which must continue to discharge fully its obligations in respect of the question of Palestine until all aspects of the question, particularly those relating to the permanent status referred to in article V of the Washington Declaration, have been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

To this end, the international community must help to strengthen this fragile peace by providing generous assistance to the Palestinian people and its leaders.

It is therefore desirable for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to intensify their cooperation with the new Palestinian Authority so that they can continue to expand their significant contribution to the effort to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people, thereby restoring its confidence in the future.

For all these reasons, the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People once again affords me an opportunity to underscore the important role played by the United Nations in supporting the Palestinian people and to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, his Special Coordinator and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their efforts to strengthen the capacities of Palestinian institutions during the transitional period.

My congratulations and my encouragement also go to the non-governmental organizations and to all those the world over whose good will has unceasingly contributed to the search for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and supported the current peace process in the Middle East.

While the road to peace remains long and arduous, the courage and lucidity of Palestinian and Israeli leaders has already opened up unprecedented prospects for peace, security, good-neighbourliness and fruitful cooperation for all the peoples of the region.

These achievements are so precious and so meaningful that the international community must mobilize further against all obstacles liable to undermine them.

For its part, Senegal, whose support for the Palestinian cause has been unfailing, will spare no effort to encourage all interested parties to pursue and multiply their contacts and negotiations in the unwavering search for a just and lasting peace in the region.

SPAIN

Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain

[Original: Spanish]

It gives me great satisfaction to convey my sincere congratulations and best wishes for success on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Three years after the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East we are witnessing the gradual consolidation of the peace process, a degree of progress in the negotiations and a rapprochement between former adversaries.

Once established, peace will enhance the lives and prospects of the people in the region as they deal with the radicalism and violence of certain parties who are determined to ruin this unique opportunity. This implies in particular full enjoyment of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people and the establishment of its own democratic framework for coexistence.

In the negotiations to secure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, Spain is willing to provide as much economic and political assistance as possible to the Palestinian Authority, on a bilateral level and in close coordination with its partners in the European Union.

SRI LANKA

Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

On behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka, it is with great pleasure that I convey our warm felicitations and best wishes to the Palestinian people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We are happy to note the progress made in the negotiations in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. The signing of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area and the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities are welcome developments. We hope that all remaining issues would be resolved through peaceful means, fulfilling the aspirations of the Palestinian people and achieving peace and stability in the region.

Sri Lanka has always regarded the question of Palestine as the crux of the Middle East problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict and has consistently supported the struggle of the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights.

We hope that the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles would bring a durable and lasting settlement to this complex and long-unresolved issue, ensuring the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. My Government will extend our solidarity and support to the Palestinian people as they embark on their challenging task of nation-building.

SUDAN

Mr. Omer Hassan Ahmed El Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan

The injustice done to the Palestinian people by victimizing it to cover up for the narrow ethical insinuations will remain a scar on the face of humanity. The people of the Sudan, who share a common heritage and culture with the fraternal Palestinian people, have since the beginning of the plight of the Palestinian people continued to maintain a consistent position based on a consideration of the Palestinian cause as uppermost of the Sudan's national causes. Guided by these motives, the Sudan has pledged and continues to pledge its full support to the Palestinian people towards the attainment of all its inalienable rights and the ultimate goal of the establishment of its national State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The establishment of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has opened a path of hope for the restoration by the international community of the usurped rights of the Palestinians, to which we continued to render our full support. Allow me, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to express our heartfelt commendation for the noble job Your Excellency and the members of the Committee have been consistently performing towards attaining the ultimate goal of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights.

The peace process, which started in the Middle East as a free exercise of the right of the Palestinians to decide their destiny, will only be qualified to be a just, durable and comprehensive peace if the occupying Power recognizes fully the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and withdraws from all the Arab territories occupied in June 1967.

May I reiterate once more our unswerving support for the Palestinian people towards the full attainment of its inalienable rights and our continued support of the Committee under your wise chairmanship.

THAILAND

Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like, on behalf of the Government and the people of Thailand, to re-emphasize our consistent and full support for the peace process under the ongoing Middle East peace negotiations in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Since we last commemorated the occasion, substantial progress towards a solution has been made by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. I wish to pay tribute to them, for their sacrifices have made possible this turning-point. I hope that the current negotiations will result in satisfactory conclusions and fulfil the needs of the Palestinian people and allow it to reach its legitimate rights fully.

The signing of the historic peace accord on 13 September 1993, followed by the signing of the implementation agreements, are leading all parties concerned towards a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine. I welcome and support this evolution as an important step towards a just and lasting peace, and urge all parties to continue and undertake to guarantee the rights of all the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and live in peace and security.

I should also like to urge the international community to dedicate its resources to the Palestinian Authority for the development of Palestine, so that the well-being of the Palestinian people and the restoration of this land to a land of peace and prosperity will be realized at the earliest possible moment.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to the invaluable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As an observer, Thailand stands ready to contribute whatever it can in support of the Committee's commendable endeavours.

TURKEY

Mrs. Tansu Ciller, Prime Minister of Turkey

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a pleasure for me to reiterate our continuing firm support for the Palestinian people in attaining its legitimate rights.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been successful over the years in promoting wider awareness within the international community of the plight of the Palestinian people, thus contributing to the creation of stronger sympathy and support for its legitimate cause.

From the very beginning, Turkey has supported the Palestinians in their just struggle. We also support the Middle East peace process based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), this being the only realistic way to settle the long-lasting dispute. The recent developments in the Middle East peace process constitute courageous and historic steps, leading to a new era of peaceful coexistence, free from all acts which endanger peace and stability.

Today the Palestinian people, more than ever, require the assistance of the international community. In January this year, Turkey donated the sum of $2 million in order to meet their immediate needs. Furthermore, we have pledged, for investments in Gaza and Jericho, an Eximbank loan of $50 million.

I would like to point out that a Turkish trade mission comprising Government officials and businessmen is paying a visit to Gaza and Jericho in order to seek possibilities of cooperation that could contribute to the improvement of reconstruction in the area.

I take this opportunity to convey the best wishes of the Turkish nation and the Turkish Government to the Palestinian people in its determined efforts for the realization of its legitimate aspirations within the framework of a just and lasting peace in the region.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, President of the United Arab Emirates

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me pleasure on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to address to you personally and to the members of your distinguished Committee our thanks, gratitude and appreciation for your sustained efforts and untiring endeavours to assist the Palestinian people in its struggle to fulfil its national aspirations in the same manner as other peoples of the world. We should also like to convey to you our appreciation and admiration for your ceaseless and untiring diligence in discharging this worthy and historic responsibility and for your fruitful efforts in publicizing to the world the just cause of the Palestinian people. That people has suffered much under the burden of Israeli occupation and from practices that are incompatible with the new international outlook on the establishment of a new international order based on the principles of justice, equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

Your efforts have borne fruit in the strong momentum that impelled the international community to embark on a serious initiative for a settlement to the problem of the Palestinian people. This initiative took shape in the convening of the Madrid peace conference in October 1991 and in the subsequent bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

For our part, we supported the convening of the conference, and we have participated in the multilateral negotiations with a view to devising a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem, at the core of which is the question of Palestine, on the basis of international legitimacy, the principles of international law, the resolutions of the United Nations, and in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. We welcomed the results achieved by these negotiations, as exemplified in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel on

13 September 1993 and in the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area signed at Cairo in May 1994. We regard these results as a positive beginning and as a first step towards the achievement of full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, Jerusalem and southern Lebanon, and towards ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate and inalienable national rights, including its right to self-determination.

Pending a comprehensive settlement as a framework for the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates assure you of their solidarity with that people and of their full support for its just struggle. We renew our pledge to provide every assistance to this fraternal people, and we are fully confident that, God willing, that day will come when the Palestinian people will exercise all of its rights in the same manner as other peoples of the world.

VIET NAM

Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November, I would like to extend to you and, through you, to all Palestinian people, our solidarity greetings and warmest congratulations.

We happily note that following the signing between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, the peace process in the Middle East continues to achieve new developments, thus opening up the prospect of the peaceful settlement of all issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Viet Nam is of the view that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution for the question of the Middle East must be based on the insurance of the inalienable, fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people and of the legitimate interests of concerned parties.

The Government and people of Viet Nam have unswervingly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people and strongly believe that the struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization will attain a final victory in the near future.

B. Messages from Governments

GUYANA

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November 1994, Guyana is heartened by the progress which continues to be made in the context of the Middle East peace process since the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed, on 13 September 1993 in Washington D.C., the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements.

It is our hope that the statesmanship and flexibility which have characterized the negotiations will continue in order to bring the process of peace to a happy conclusion.

There have been setbacks which we all regret. There have also been serious attempts to derail the process. The Government and the people of Guyana are confident, however, that, given the overwhelming desire for peace in the Middle East, a definitive solution will result.

As a member of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Guyana has championed the cause of the Palestinian people and will continue to do so until its struggle is won.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Government of South Africa has noted with satisfaction the advances made in the Israeli/Palestinian track of the ongoing Middle East peace process and is assured that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace will be the fruits of the efforts to promote reconciliation and common respect in the Middle East. It is the belief of the South African Government that the implementation of the Declaration of Principles signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel lays the groundwork for further discussion and negotiation on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Notwithstanding certain outstanding issues, South Africa is confident that all outstanding matters pertaining to the rights of the Palestinian people could be addressed under the provisions of the Declaration of Principles.

The awarding of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize to three Middle East leaders gives testimony to the importance the international community places on the success of the peace process, and recognizes the role, conviction and determination of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples in seeking a prosperous, conflict-free future.

The South African Government trusts that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace will be achieved in the Middle East and that the rights of all people in the region will be addressed in accordance with international practices and standards. The Government of the Republic of South Africa further wishes to encourage the peoples of the Middle East to continue with the ongoing negotiations with a view to establishing and entrenching the rights of all people to live in a stable, peaceful and free environment.

C. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

ARGENTINA

Mr. Guido Di Tella, Minister of External Relations, International Commerce and Culture

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government of the Argentine Republic wishes to reiterate its great satisfaction at the progress achieved in the Middle East, particularly since the conclusion in Washington in September 1993 of the agreement between representatives of the Palestinian people and Israel.

The development and well-being of peoples, goals which States must set at the close of the twentieth century, are difficult to achieve without international cooperation, and cooperation goes hand in hand with peace. The internationally recognized political vision, courage and determination displayed by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in their quest for peace make them worthy of their recently awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

The Argentine Republic supports and encourages the efforts of all countries in the region to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this connection, it welcomes the recent agreement between the Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel.

BRAZIL

Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, Minister for External Relations

On behalf of the Government and people of Brazil, I wish to extend to the Palestinian people my warmest congratulations on the occasion of its International Day of Solidarity.

The prospects for the attainment of a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question have been embraced by the signing of the Cairo agreement and of the early empowerment agreement of 29 August between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Indeed, this year's observance occurs at a time in which the Palestinian Authority and its administrative structures are already in place in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. We have reasons to rejoice over these initial steps towards the fulfilment of the legitimate Palestinian aspirations to self-determination and nationhood.

The Brazilian Government reiterates its intention to continue to support the efforts of the international community for the creation of an environment conducive to the smooth implementation of the Declaration of Principles and in support to the Palestinian Authority. In particular, we welcome recent United Nations initiatives such as the Peace Implementation Programme carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the appointment of a Special Coordinator in the occupied territories. We renew our call to all States to continue to support these commendable efforts to bring peace and development to the Middle East.

BURKINA FASO

Mr. Ouedraogo Ablasse, Minister for External Relations

[Original: French]

In its resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the General Assembly decided to organize the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Since then, the United Nations has consistently supported the heroic struggle that the Palestinian people has been waging for the past 40 years under the wise guidance of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

The international community's efforts have resulted in the peace process currently under way.

Burkina Faso welcomed and applauded the signing on 13 September 1993 of the historic Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO and the signing on 4 May 1994 of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area. My country encourages the parties concerned to persevere in that endeavour in order to ensure the speedy implementation of those agreements. It also stresses the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict, which for decades has been a source of constant instability and has caused unspeakable suffering to the Arab and Israeli peoples.

In this regard, the international community should provide assistance to the Palestinian people and help it in the process of nation-building.

Burkina Faso will make every effort to contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region based on the expressed desires of the parties directly concerned and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

On this solemn day, I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of Burkina Faso, to convey my sincerest wishes for the success of peace, understanding and harmony in the Middle East and Palestine.

DOMINICA

Mr. Brian G. K. Alleyne, Minister for External Affairs and OECS Unity of the Commonwealth of Dominica

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica welcomes the improving relations between the Palestinian people and the State of Israel, the beginning of the process of realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people of self-determination and a homeland.

We express our deep concern that there are elements among both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples who seek to disrupt the peace process, and our deep hope that these elements are not allowed to succeed in their retrogressive efforts.

We emphasize our continuing support for progress in the peace negotiations and in the progressive realization and development of the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people towards full nationhood.

GREECE

Mr. Karolos Papoulias, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece would like, on this day, 29 November 1994, to pay tribute to the Palestinian people and its leadership, as well as to express its solidarity to those who have opted for peace.

The task of reconstruction is formidable and the strain on the Palestinians acute. Nevertheless, I am convinced that this courageous people, with the help of the international community, will achieve peace and development, so long overdue.

I hope that tangible results, offering relief and hope to the Palestinian people, will very soon be a reality.

Moderation, perseverance and cooperation with all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process will bring about a new era to the benefit of the peoples in the region.

Greece, both bilaterally and with the European Union, as it demonstrated during her Presidency of the European Union, contributes and will continue to offer every possible support and assistance, so that both the results already achieved and those anticipated will not be ephemeral, and the progress towards a final, lasting and just peace will be expeditious.

JAPAN

Mr. Yohei Kono, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the occasion of the seventeenth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to express my warmest congratulations to the people of Palestine.

The Middle East peace process initiated by the Madrid Conference in October 1991 has made historic achievements, including the mutual recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel and the subsequent signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in September of last year, and the start of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho this past May.

While a peace treaty was signed by Jordan and Israel on 26 October, we anticipate progress in the negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as between Israel and Lebanon, which will further contribute to the stability and peace of the world.

Japan has spared no effort to promote peace negotiations. Since announcing, in September of 1994, its intention to extend assistance amounting to $200 million to the Palestinians over the course of two years, it has made utmost efforts to disburse that aid. In particular, Japan is working with other major donors to ensure that maximum assistance is provided to cover the start-up cost of the self-rule government; such assistance is urgently needed to ensure that the self-rule government will be functional.

In addition, Japan is striving to promote political dialogue between the parties to the peace process and is making efforts to enhance confidence among them through multilateral Middle East peace negotiations. It is also continuing to assist the social and economic development of the countries in the region.

The terrorist acts of those who seek to destroy the peace process are of serious concern to the international community. Japan is strongly opposed to terrorism in all its forms, and stresses the need to prevent and eliminate it once and for all.

I would like to conclude my greeting with the prayer that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace will soon be established in the Middle East so that peoples in the region, who have endured untold suffering through many years of conflict, will at last be able to enjoy stable and prosperous lives.

LEBANON

H.E. Mr. Fares Boueiz, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like to reaffirm, on behalf of the people and Government of Lebanon, our absolute and continuing solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people as it strives to achieve its legitimate national objectives of self-determination in its territory, like other peoples in the region.

Developments to date call for serious steps to be taken to affirm the legal and historical constants inherent in the Palestinian question since its inception, which have already been asserted in successive General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and by many conferences and international organizations. Foremost among those constants is the right of the Palestinian people to return to its land.

The Palestinian people continues to suffer the denial of its human rights. It still has an enormous struggle ahead of it, which will require great efforts, patience and many sacrifices in the face of the historic injustice and oppression to which it is exposed by the colonialist Israeli occupation. This calls for a firm alliance and coordination between the fraternal Arab peoples, who have considered Palestine their primary concern since the beginning of this century. It also requires the stimulation and encouragement of international support, based on the principles of justice, equity and law, to achieve a balance in the aftermath of the policy of fait accompli pursued by Israel and its allies, and the effect that has had on the political equilibrium of the existing peace process.

Lebanon, believing as it does in a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, reiterates on this occasion the necessity of making progress in every aspect of the peace process, begun more than three years ago, by enforcing compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

What has been achieved so far is only the beginning. Any further efforts made in this respect will remain nugatory if they fail to make progress on all fronts and lead to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Any agreement which does not do this is likely to fail, and will sow the seeds for new conflicts in the future.

A just, lasting and comprehensive peace would guarantee that what the Palestinian people has achieved through its sacrifices is firmly established and reinforced. It is the only way to bring about a brighter and more promising future for all the peoples and States of the region.

The people of Lebanon, who in the past have made many sacrifices, as they continue to do, in support of the right of the Palestinian people to return to and consolidate its future on its national territory, trust in the ability of the Palestinian people, if allowed to exercise its legitimate rights, to impose its presence on the map of the Middle East, and to play a creative and effective role in developing the region, and changing it into an oasis of peace and prosperity.

We should like to express our appreciation and admiration of all those who have consistently supported the rights of the Palestinian people, especially those who serve on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We hope they will achieve their goal, which is shared by us all, of establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, based on recognition of the legitimate rights of all its peoples, and in particular, the Palestinian people.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it gives me pleasure to salute you and extend to you our gratitude for the great efforts the United Nations has been making since its foundation to assist the Palestinian people and promote the cause of liberation in the world in general. I must also convey our gratitude to Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for his great efforts to promote the rights of the Palestinian people and publicize its cause.

The situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine in particular have received much attention from the United Nations, and many resolutions have been adopted in their regard addressing the various aspects of the Palestine issue. The Israeli occupation authorities, however, have defied all such resolutions endorsing the inalienable and legitimate right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and exercise self-determination. They have persisted in their extremist attitudes and have continued to carry out acts of repression against the Palestinian people and to establish illegal settlements in Palestinian territory and in the other occupied Arab territories.

Free rein has been given to the occupation forces and to Israeli settlers. This has led to massacres that have taken the lives of many Palestinians, most recently the massacre at the Haram al-Ibrahimi on 25 February 1994 in which a Zionist settler killed more than 30 Palestinians while they were at prayer. There have subsequently been measures to Judaize and partition the Haram al-Ibrahimi, in flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions.

The most recent developments in the Palestine issue do not take account of the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination in the same manner as other peoples. This is very far removed from the just peace for which hopes were entertained and which would realize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, my country, which believes that the right to self-determination is one of the rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, reaffirms that resolving the Palestine issue is the responsibility of the United Nations, the international organization to which is entrusted the task of maintaining international peace and security. It must be done, just as in the case of South Africa, in such a way as to guarantee the Palestinian people its legitimate rights, including the right to exercise self-determination, return to its land and establish a Palestinian State that is not based on racism and hatred but on justice, equality and respect for human rights, a State in which both Arabs and Jews may live. Failing this, peace cannot be established in the region, the conflict will continue and international peace and security will be threatened.

More than at any other time in the past, the United Nations is today required to take action to implement its resolutions on the question of Palestine, to secure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish an independent State on Palestinian soil, and to take deterrent measures to force the occupation authorities, which have persistently defied the resolutions of the international community, to comply with international legitimacy so that the Organization may have the credibility it merits.

We salute and support the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people to liberate the occupied Palestinian territories and the resistance to Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. We affirm our solidarity with the heroic struggle until such time as the occupied Arab territories are liberated and the Palestinian people achieves its legitimate demands as endorsed by international legitimacy.

OMAN

Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

I should first like to praise the work of your Committee, whose persevering efforts over the years have helped the Palestinian people to reap the first fruits of its long struggle to live a life of honour and self-esteem in its land. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank you and all the members of the Committee for your endeavours which have culminated in this fine achievement.

Renewing its annual participation in this important event, the Sultanate reaffirms its unwavering support for the just demands of the Palestinian people for a life of security and peace in its land. Our support has been and still is a cornerstone of Omani policy aimed at consolidating international law and legitimacy so that truth, justice and peace may prevail in the world.

Referring back to what I said last year soon after the Palestinian-Israeli agreement to the effect that "what has been achieved is a first step in the right direction towards a comprehensive and just settlement and will have a favourable impact on the other negotiations between Israel and the Arab States", I feel that we can be proud that the course of events has borne out the Sultanate's view. We wish to reiterate on this occasion that any achievement by the two main parties concerned will certainly be followed rapidly by an easing of tension between the States of the region and will hasten rapprochement between all the parties.

As we come together to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which has suffered greatly from injustice and oppression, we feel that the small steps that have been taken up to now are the beginning of a process whose final aim is to achieve the cherished goal of peaceful coexistence in security and stability. And having spared no effort, in cooperation with the international community, to reach a fundamental settlement that ends the sufferings of the Palestinian people and lays in their place the foundations of mutual trust and respect, we affirm our continued support for the steps being taken by the two parties to hasten the removal of barriers and the creation of alternatives that will usher in an era of peace and prosperity.

In this context, the Committee has many residual tasks to address, including putting pressure on Israel to speed up the application of confidence-building measures *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian side by halting the oppressive practices perpetrated against the Palestinian people and its daily violations of the rights of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

With a view to helping the Palestinian self-rule authority to compensate for some of what the Palestinian people have been deprived of in the past, the Committee has a duty to direct the attention of the international community to the need to provide and deliver the assistance that some donor States and international financial institutions promised the Authority in order to enable it to participate in infrastructural and development projects.

The Committee's support for the local Palestinian Authority contributes to security and stability not only in the self-rule areas but also in the Middle East as a whole, inasmuch as the extension of the powers of the Palestinian Authority to the rest of Palestinian territory will certainly advance the peace process and promote security and stability in the area concerned.

In conclusion, I convey to you and to the other members of the Committee on behalf of the Sultanate our great appreciation for the dedicated efforts whose fruits have advanced the cause of justice, and we assure you that our country will spare no effort to support the work of the Committee.

With our sincere appreciation and respect.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

The Syrian Arab Republic joins you in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and of solidarity with its legitimate struggle for the restoration of its inalienable national rights. It gives us pleasure on this occasion once again to salute the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and to affirm our abiding solidarity with it in its just struggle for the restoration of its legitimate national rights and, primarily, its right to exercise self-determination in the same manner as other peoples in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Syrian Arab Republic, whose history is linked with the defence of the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people, remains true to its principles. It will continue to strive for a just and comprehensive peace, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace, that will ensure Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and secure the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. A genuine peace cannot be built when there are still occupied territories and usurped rights.

We salute the efforts of your distinguished Committee in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people, and, together with the international community, we look forward to the day when that comprehensive, just and lasting peace will prevail in the region that will spare its peoples the horrors of war and ensure their security, stability and prosperity.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mr. Ralph Maraj, Minister for Foreign Affairs

November 29 commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Once again the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago joins with the international community in this annual observance as an affirmation of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Peace initiatives in the Middle East, stimulated no doubt by the historic Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel on 13 September 1993, provide the framework for a new dialogue, peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Trinidad and Tobago remains convinced that peace and stability will be achieved in the Middle East only when the Palestinian people enjoys and exercises its inalienable right to its own homeland to build its future in peace, dignity and freedom. Recent developments in the peace effort nurture the hope of a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question and the problems of the region.

UGANDA

Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On behalf of the Government and people of Uganda, I express our support to all Palestinians on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

As we commemorate the occasion, Uganda takes cognizance of the current developments in the peace process between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. It is our ardent hope and desire that the peace process will lead to the desired end whereby the Palestinian people shall be enabled to exercise all its inalienable rights in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

UKRAINE

Mr. Gennadi Udovenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Accept my sincere greetings on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The year 1994 will undoubtedly go down in the history of the Palestinian people as one of the new remarkable progress on the way towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting peace in the Middle East. Ukraine welcomed the conclusion of the Cairo Agreement in May 1994 as the next important step following the historic Declaration of Principles of September 1993 signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We do hope that the implementation of the above documents will contribute to the acceptable solution of the key problem in the Arab-Israeli conflict - the Palestinian one. Ukraine considers that the implementation of these agreements will promote the national self-determination of the Palestinian people. The declaration of self-government in the Gaza Strip and Jericho was the first step in that direction.

In this regard the Committee's primary objective - the promotion of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - should be pursued with due regard to the new positive realities in the Middle East peace process.

Being a member of the Committee, Ukraine has always paid priority attention to the international efforts aimed at the final settlement of the Middle East conflict in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We stand for security and stability in the whole region and resolutely condemn the flashes of extremism and terrorism by whomsoever committed. The overall political situation in the region is conducive to the cessation of bloodshed among the civilian population.

Availing itself of this opportunity, Ukraine reconfirms its full readiness to contribute its utmost to the further process of search for the establishment of peace in the region.

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Nathan Shamuyarira, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Once again, it is my singular honour to be associated with this very important date and occasion, 29 November, when the world renews and rededicates itself to the Palestinian struggle for nationhood and full sovereignty. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People affirms to the Palestinians that their struggle is not theirs alone but one for which the international community, by General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, assumed responsibility. May I therefore, on behalf of the Government and people of Zimbabwe, extend to Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian people our very warm friendship and firm message of solidarity.

The September 1993 Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel marked a new hope, a turning-point not only for the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but for the entire Middle East region. The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan has opened new avenues for dialogue between the two erstwhile enemies. Contacts between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, we believe, are now taking place, a dialogue which only a few months ago could never have been envisioned.

Zimbabwe expresses its disappointment that the donor community has not honoured its pledges to the Palestinian people as it underpinned the 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles. Without money, the PLO is emasculated. Without tangible investment, law and order, creating more jobs, more schools and hospitals, the Palestinians are hard-pressed to appreciate the peace process with Israel. As it is, the PLO has found it immensely difficult to sell to its people why it settled for less than a full-fledged sovereign homeland for Palestinians. Enemies of the Washington document are now exploiting this gap created by donor indifference. Ours is an impassioned plea to the international community to be supportive of the PLO so that at the end of the day, all Palestinians will believe that, yes, the PLO is the way to true freedom and statehood. The costs of letting the peace process in the Middle East collapse are simply too horrendous to contemplate.

To the Palestinian people our message is that ultimately "you are your own liberators". Unity is paramount. Perseverance is imperative and patience instructive. Many difficulties remain which will require enormous efforts by both the PLO and Israel to ensure that the complex negotiations will lead to lasting peace based on the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to its own independent State.

D. Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People that you are commemorating today, I extend to you a message of solidarity and good wishes.

To the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I extend my congratulations on its inexorable efforts to sensitize world opinion on the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), committed as it is to peoples' struggle for self-determination and independence, was in the forefront in support of the Palestinian cause. OAU's stance was expressed, time and again, through resolutions, declarations and releases and participation in conferences and symposia.

Today, with the arrival of President Arafat in Gaza and the beginning of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, we are happy to note that the Palestinian people is on the way to recovering its occupied territories and exercising its inalienable national rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to an independent State, as provided for in the various United Nations resolutions.

The Organization of African Unity wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to the Palestinian cause and its support for the Palestinian people in its search for national identity, so that a lasting peace will reign in the region.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 29 November of every year, is a confirmation of the support of the international community to the Palestinian people in its legitimate struggle to attain its inalienable rights.

On this occasion I would like to express, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), our appreciation and gratitude to the United Nations and all its organs and agencies, especially the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the ceaseless efforts they have always exerted and continue to, in support of the inalienable rights and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and extending it with all kinds of support.

This year, we observe this occasion amid new positive developments in the Middle East following the implementation of the agreement on interim self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and Jericho areas and the assumption by the Palestinian National Authority of its tasks. The Palestinian people have commenced the process of development and reconstruction of its national economy and institutions, as well as consolidating its national authority on its land. These positive developments constitute an

important step towards transferring all powers in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif, to the Palestinian National Authority.

As it expresses its support to the peace process in the Middle East aiming at finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, OIC reaffirms its position that a just and comprehensive peace can only be achieved by realizing full Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and restoring the inalienable legitimate national and political rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return, to self-determination and to establish its independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

OIC also reaffirms its commitment to the issue of Al-Quds al-Sharif which is its prime cause, being part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, and the necessity of its restoration to Palestinian sovereignty as the capital of the State of Palestine, as a guarantee for peace and security in the region.

Moreover, at this stage we would like to see the positive developments on the political side to be reflected in the situation in the occupied territories by halting the process of settlements and the acts of repression and inhuman practices and procedures to which the Palestinian people in the occupied territories are being subjected, as well as the continuous violations of the Islamic holy places, as witnessed lately in the partition of the Ibrahimi Holy Mosque in the city of Al-Chill (Hebron), and in violation of all international laws and conventions, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. These steps are necessary for building trust and confidence.

We would also like here to note our support to the other agreements reached within the framework of the peace process, especially the peace treaty signed lately between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel. Moreover, we affirm the necessity of achieving positive developments on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in a manner that would guarantee full Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories.

Now that the era of peace has come to the Middle East, the international community is requested to affirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people and present them with all kinds of political and economic support in its struggle to regain its inalienable political rights, and in order to ensure security and stability and establish the long-sought just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

E. Messages from United Nations specialized agencies

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General

Too many deaths, too many wounded keep reminding us that the path to peace cannot be attained only through signatures, however essential these may be.

The international community has a vital role to play in making words of peace become facts of peace.

UNESCO is sparing no effort to assist in the establishment and consolidation of peace through education, science, culture and communication. But such efforts may be vain if they are not adequately and urgently supported.

The process of rehabilitation of schools has begun, but thousands of other needs remain unattended. New programmes must be set up for the children, confidence must be restored, pluricultural roots must be enabled to flourish.

On 9 December 1993, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Several activities listed in the Memorandum have been initiated, others will depend on global solidarity towards the Palestinian people, more than half of whom live in the diaspora. Our plea for active support must be heard today; tomorrow will be too late.

May this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People bring about a renewed active commitment by all.

F. Messages from non-governmental organizations

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ORGANIZATION

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the International Progress Organization takes this opportunity to express once again our support for the Palestinian people.

Even though the Declaration of Principles was signed more than a year ago, not much progress has been accomplished since that date.

The world community, and especially the United States of America, must provide more of the economic and financial support to improve the economic potential for the Palestinian people living in the occupied areas. The elections to be held in Palestine must take place soon and Israel must quickly withdraw its military forces from Jericho and Gaza to enhance free elections. The resolutions consecrating Palestinian rights, including Security Council resolution 242 (1967), the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of return that have been adopted by the United Nations, must not be eliminated until the restoration of Palestinian rights has first been achieved throughout all of occupied Palestine.

There can be no peace in the Middle East unless and until all of the rights of the Palestinian people are fully respected and the Israelis acknowledge that East Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine.

IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

Mr. Kébé Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

On behalf of the Committee as a whole, I should like to express our sincere appreciation to the Heads of State and Government, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and the organizations I have just mentioned and to all participants for their constant efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for the support they have always given to the objectives and activities of our Committee. The statements that we have heard and the messages of solidarity we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the attainment of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions. I can assure you that we, the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will spare no effort for the achievement of those objectives.

Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization

[Original: Arabic]

It gives me great pleasure, at the conclusion of this ceremony held in solidarity with the Palestinian people, to express to you our profound gratitude for the ceaseless efforts you have made in support of the right of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights. I should like to thank all members of the Committee for the efforts they have made towards the attainment of this noble objective.

It also gives me great pleasure to extend our thanks to all participants for having come to share this commemoration. I wish in particular to mention those who made statements at the beginning of the meeting: the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the representative of the Secretary-General. I wish also to thank the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for his objective depiction of the situation in our occupied lands.

I am grateful also for the messages sent by the Heads of State and Government and the Foreign Ministers of friendly countries to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and their support for our national rights. My thanks go also to all our friends who have joined us in commemorating this Day, by being with us here today, by sending messages or by otherwise expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

I reiterate my thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, to all those present in this room, and to all members of the Committee, a Committee that is working hard to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights. I hope that, in the changing circumstances of the Middle East, the march towards peace will reach the successful conclusion the international community desires.

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